

PROPOSAL FP05 - 09

Existing regulation: Bristol Bay Area – Char

§ __.27(i)(5)(xiv) *You may take salmon and char only under authority of a subsistence fishing permit. You may take rainbow trout only under authority of a Federal subsistence fishing permit; permit conditions and systems to receive special protection will be determined by the local Federal fisheries manager in consultation with ADF&G and local users.*

(xv) Only one subsistence fishing permit for salmon, one for char, and one for rainbow trout may be issued to each household per year.

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Reason for changing the regulation: Most subsistence fishermen do not realize that this is required in current regulation and it puts them “at risk” for fishery violations. The primary intent of all subsistence fishermen is just to feed and provide for their families. Those fishermen who do not first acquire a permit unknowingly violate this regulation that has been in effect pursuant to State regulation for the past 20+ years and is in current Federal regulation. ADF&G made regulatory changes to 5AAC 01.330. SUBSISTENCE FISHING PERMITS in Bristol Bay during the December 9-16, 2003, Board of Fisheries meeting that eliminated the permit requirement to harvest trout and char. Under current Federal regulation, a subsistence harvest permit is still required to harvest char. Changing this regulation would then align regulatory language consistent with State regulation and would reduce confusion to those who fish in both State and Federal waters. State records indicate that there are very few freshwater fishing permits issued for harvesting char in Bristol Bay and that compliance is very low to minimal. We believe that harvest, dependence, and consumption of these stocks are higher than what the harvest records (freshwater permit reports) will show. The subsistence harvest of char in Bristol Bay is a vital food source and is important that subsistence fishers be allowed to continue taking of this resource without any potential of prosecution. Most fishing permits are issued at hub communities (ADF&G Dillingham and King Salmon) and seldom available in the outlying villages. This places a financial burden on village residents who would have to travel to those hubs to acquire a harvest permit.

Effect of change on fish or shellfish populations: Very little to no impact. Many families in Bristol Bay traditionally harvest char as a subsistence food without first acquiring a freshwater harvest permit. This regulation is unknowingly overlooked and would not change the way subsistence fishermen fish because they didn’t know it in the first place.

Effect of change on subsistence users: If this change in regulation were adopted, then the potential for fishery violations and citations would be reduced. This would also eliminate the financial burden for those who would have to travel to hub communities to acquire a freshwater fishing permit.

Effect on other uses, i.e. sport/recreational and commercial: No anticipated change.

Proposed by: Bristol Bay Native Association, Dillingham